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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019-01-15  
TAGS: PREL PPTS UNSC ER DJ  
SUBJECT: GODJ WELCOMES UNSCR 1862 ON DJIBOUTI/ERITREA BORDER

REF: a) 2008 DJIBOUTI 1003

CLASSIFIED BY: James Swan, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B)

¶1. (C) Foreign Minister Mahmoud Youssouf called Ambassador January 15 to express thanks for UNSCR 1862 regarding the Djibouti/Eritrea border dispute. Youssouf said the GODJ was pleased with the outcome. Ambassador responded that we, too, thought it was a strong resolution -- one that had resulted from a collaborative effort, including close consultation with Djiboutian PermRep Roble Olhaye. Separately, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs circulated the text of UNSCR 1862 via diplomatic note to all foreign missions in Djibouti, highlighting that "the Security Council placed responsibility for the aggression on Eritrea and demanded that it withdraw its troops from Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island within five weeks."

¶2. (C) Admitting it was unlikely that the GSE would respond positively to the resolution, the Foreign Minister commented that the GODJ must now begin to develop a strategy for "the next stage," after the five-week deadline has elapsed. This is a point that Embassy Djibouti has made repeatedly over the past two months to senior GODJ contacts, including Youssouf, National Security Advisor Hassan Said Khaireh, and Presidency Secretary General Ismail Tani. Ambassador offered to work closely with Youssouf as the GODJ develops its strategy.

¶3. (C) In a conversation with Prime Minister Dileita on January 14, Ambassador briefed him on the draft resolution then awaiting formal adoption. The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction that the resolution was so favorable to Djibouti's position. He underscored the heavy burden the GODJ continues to suffer by keeping some forty percent of its national forces (about 2000 out of 5000 troops) near the border to defend against Eritrea. He agreed it was unlikely Eritrea would accede to the terms of the UNSCR. Dileita acknowledged that Djibouti lacks a viable military option, and would in fact be open to negotiation with the GSE over any claim that the border in this remote desert area should be adjusted. Unfortunately, Dileita said, all discussion remains blocked by the GSE's refusal to acknowledge that there is even a problem.

¶4. (C) Comment: The USG has earned further goodwill with Djiboutians through our strong support for UNSCR 1862 and our close consultation with the GODJ through the long process leading to its adoption. Post will continue to engage key GODJ foreign affairs and security contacts as they develop their strategy going forward.  
SWAN

To view the entire SMART message, go to URL [http://repository.state.gov/\\_layouts/OSS/SearchResults.aspx?k=messageid:42d4ab44-3899-442a-96](http://repository.state.gov/_layouts/OSS/SearchResults.aspx?k=messageid:42d4ab44-3899-442a-96)